**The Archaeology of Food and Consumption in Byzantium**

By Prof. Dr. Joanita Vroom (Leiden University)

True knowledge is achieved when the deepest scholarly ideas converge with the shallowest clichés. One clear example is the observation ‘you are what you eat’. This insight sheds light on our dietary behaviour, but also generated stimulating research by sociologists and anthropologists. Unfortunately, archaeologists of the Mediterranean Middle Ages have often neglected evidence related to foodways, leaving a gap in our knowledge of daily life in that period. This lecture sets out to improve this situation by presenting case studies from the Byzantine world. By combining written sources (including recipes), pictorial evidence, and archaeological data, it aims to deepen our understanding of gastronomic and consumption patterns in the Medieval Mediterranean. Furthermore, it shows possibilities for experimental archaeology by the reconstruction (or re-enactment/replication) of historical recipes by the ‘Leiden Food Labs’.

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Joanita Vroom is Professor in Archaeology of Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia, specializing in the material culture of the 7th to 19th centuries. She takes a special interest in the social-economic (production and distribution) and cultural aspects (consumption, cuisine and dining habits) of ceramics. Using an interdisciplinary approach and a long term perspective on intra-regional and inter-regional networks, she studies many key collections of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery from urban and rural sites in the Adriatic Sea, the Aegean, the Near East and the Persian Gulf.